Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Joseph Cook recently told a congregation of Chicagoans that Chicago thought well of itself and the world thought well of Chicago, but the question to consider was what God thought of it. Perhaps Joseph, as God's *fidus Achates*, will kindly inform us just what God's opinion is concerning Chicago.

One of the numerous sections of New York's new penal code relating to the observance of Sunday and kindred subjects makes it a misdemeanor to force any one by threats or violence to profess or practise any particular form of religious belief. That is to say, this section makes it a misdemeanor to enforce any of the other sections for the others threaten to inflict penalties on all who do not observe Sunday as the Christian Church commands.

John Most, formerly editor of the London "Freiheit," whose term of imprisonment in England recently expired, will soon arrive at New York, where he will be warmly welcomed The socialistic societies will give him a reception in the Germania Assembly Rooms, 291 Bowery, on the evening of December 17, and the following evening, in Cooper Institute, he will for the first time address an American audience. Later he will speak in other cities

Mr. Heywood declines to conduct his own case in court on the ground that he "will not, cannot plead or even ask for freedom or life before these savage usurpations miscalled courts of justice" Bosh, Mr. Heywood! To take this ground, after engaging lawyers to plead for you, is not only inconsistent, but silly. What you ask through a lawyer selected and appointed by yourself, you ask yourself, and this nothing can disguise. Either allow no defence at all, or else defend yourself.

New York's penal code makes attempted suicide a felony, punishable by fine and imprisonment This is the crowning absurdity and tyranny of law. If a man has no control over his own life, what earthly rights do remain to him? Government, with its laws against the use of contrivances to prevent conception, says his coming into the world shall not be avoided, and, after oppressing him until life becomes irksome and without hope, declares that he shall not resign, but must continue to be oppressed until he can depart in a regular, peaceable, and law-abiding manner by starvation or the authorized rope.

Liberty is dead, cremated, and buried. Mr. George Howe of Providence, R. I., officiated as executioner, fireman, and undertaker. Its readers will remember his announcement, in a note stopping his subscription, of the "close of its patronage." It now appears that, not satisfied with thus administering our death-blow, he burned a copy of the paper, carried the ashes on a shovel into his back-yard, dug a grave five feet deep, and buried them with appropriate ceremonies. Whether the latter included the pronouncing of an anathema we are not informed. All this because Mr. Howe is a Roman Catholic, and Liberty, finding his church despotic, plainly says so.

The examination of E. H. Heywood before United States Commissioner Hallett was held November 23, and resulted in the holding of the accused in $1,000 to await the action of the grand jury, Elizur Wright giving bonds for his appearance at the December term of the court. The prosecution, or rather Mr Comstock, — practically the same thing, for Mr. Comstock appeared to run the government counsel and the court itself, — presented no evidence except that bearing on the syringe charge, dropping "Cupid's Yokes" and the selections from 'Leaves of Grass," though these are likely to be included in the indictment The examination was a sham throughout, it being evident that the commissioner had fully made up his mind in advance, and only listened to the evidence and the argument to save appearances. This was borne out by a remark which the editor of Liberty accidentally overheard Blodgett, the government lawyer, drop after the proceedings. Said he (in substance): "I don't often have a chance to talk before the commissioner, but I expected to do some talking today. The commissioner, however, rendered his decision without waiting to hear from me, I must admit that the entire proceedings appeared to be of an *ex parte* character." It seems to us that the defence made some serious mistakes, — among them, moving to quash the complaints because of informalities, thus preventing these informalities from creeping into the indictment with fatal effect, and, second, Mr. Pickering's cross-examination of Comstock and subsequent argument in a tone which might have had some effect upon a jury, but which could only prejudice a judge. At the close an exciting incident occurred. Mr. Heywood, being called upon to go through the forms incident to the bailing process, declined to take any part in an assault upon himself. The commissioner became angry at this, committed the prisoner, and abruptly left the court-room. By request of Mr. Heywood's counsel, however, he again entered, and asked Mr. Heywood if he was ready to give bonds. The latter replied that he would give his word that he would appear in court when wanted. The commissioner made another exit, more sudden than the first. Mr. Heywood was at this point removed in charge of an officer. But his friends and counsel finally inducing him to change his course, the commissioner's presence was again secured and the requisite forms gone through, all the functionaries of the court-room swelling with pride at this triumph of law and order. Liberty honors Mr. Heywood's protest, but thinks he should not have made it unless prepared to sternly adhere to it. He damaged himself by succumbing Elizur Wright, his bondsman, was more successful, but probably because of his high reputation. Being asked to hold up his right hand, Mr. Wright said: "This ceremony is to me an entirely meaningless one, and, although I am ready to perform it if the court insists, it will have no more effect upon me than if I were to say, 'So help me the multiplication table.'" The commissioner viewed him with a puzzled countenance, but finally managed to ask the government if it would waive the oath in Mr. Wright's case, and, having received an affirmative answer, warned the brave old gentleman, with a show of sternness, that he was acting under the pains and penalties of perjury. Mr. Wright did not seem awestricken in the least, but answered the questions put to him with entire composure. And now for the trial itself!

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"A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by oppression, nor deceived by erroneous opinions." — PROUDHON.

To Our Subscribers.

For various reasons, personal to its editor, Liberty is to take a brief vacation, and will not appear again until January 20, 1883. It regrets even so short a separation from its readers, and earnestly begs their indulgence therefor. Let none of them, however, attribute it to lessening prosperity. The paper is stronger today than it ever was, has more subscribers than it ever had, and is progressing as satisfactorily as so outspoken a journal could be expected to. We are simply "letting go to get a better hold." Meanwhile, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all!

Anarchism and Consent.

The Declaration of Independence is probably the most "communistic" document that ever obtained celebrity among good "law-and-order" people on both continents. It contains numerous internal evidences to show that, were Thomas Jefferson living to-day, he would be a pronounced Anarchist. It is no wonder that Sir Henry Maine quotes its reputation among aristocratic circles of its day as a chimera of generalities imbibed by Jefferson through familiar contact with French atheists.

The above-named document declares that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." It therefore follows that, when any individual is governed by a government without his or her consent, that government is exercising unjust powers, and is a usurpation. And yet, in the government subsequently instituted under the Constitution one-half of the people (the women) were denied representation at the onset, while, under the ban of slavery and other constitutional bars, the number permitted to express consent or dissent was in the aggregate cut down to less than one-tenth of the whole people. To what a ridiculous farce do Jefferson's glittering generalities reduce themselves at the first touch of common sense!

It was never seriously contemplated by the founders of this government that it should be a government of consent. The framers of the Constitution could not have even meant that the will of a majority should stand as consent, for they disfranchised a majority of the people to start with. Allowing that the majority principle stood with them for consent, they must have had plainly in view a *majority of the minority*, which involves a stroke of *reductio ad absurdum* for the vaunted majority-rule idea, not very comforting to Fourth of July patriots.

Force is the essence of all positive governmental institutions. Under any conceivable interpretation of Jefferson's talk about the consent of the governed, every existing government is outlawed beyond recovery, and the "just powers" vanish into thin air.

The only pretext on which the defender of political government can make existing usurpations float upon consent is to assert that going to the polls and voting, bearing arms, paying taxes, serving on juries, etc., are presumptive evidences that those who do so consent to the institutions under which they live. As well might it be argued that, in accepting the offer of a highwayman to toss one's last penny to see whether the robber should take it or leave it, the victim thereby consents to the highwayman's occupation. As the only alternative against extortion, a man may go to the polls and vote against the proposed levy of a corrupt ring of political jobbers, recognizing the ballot-box only on grounds of expediency, as a sinking man might hug a filthy pile in the dock. An Anarchist may pay taxes to escape going to jail, or sit in a jury-box to save a friend, in accordance with his rating of the costs of given offences against his principles.

But, behind all these accidents of fate, the Anarchist puts this bottom question to government and its defenders: *By what right am I thrust into the alternative of recognizing the machinery of the State as the only chance left me of rescuing my life, liberty, and possessions from invasion?* To argue the right of consent in response to this question is utterly ridiculous. To argue the right of might is to use the argument of a professional robber. How will the defender of the State answer it, then?

The State is a pure usurpation. The individual is coerced for his own good, — somebody outside of himself being set up as authoritative judge of what is for his own good. He is thus put in the same moral dock as were the victims of the Inquisition. This scheme will continue to work finely for the oppressor until the political victim turns around and applies the same argument to the inquisitor. The Anarchist, however, proposes to coerce the agents of the State no further for their own good than to see to it that they step down and out, go home and mind their own business, and leave Liberty, consent, and natural selection to crystallize society into an organization that shall conform to natural law. If the inquisitors refuse to go home peaceably, and among the accidents of the war for Liberty some of them consequently get hurt "for their own good," they, as Christians, can do no more than enter it upon the profit-and-loss account of an All-Wise Providence.

"Crimes Against Religious Liberty."

Italian rag-pickers, searching barrels in the street, arrested in the name of Christian charity for desecrating the holy Sabbath; newsboys and bootblacks overawed by pious policemen and prevented from earning the few cents upon which they depend for food; elevated railroads, horse cars, and churches running on full time, and the monopolists and parsons making money for the glory of God, — a few of the phenomena attendant upon the enforcing of the new penal code of New York last Sunday. Sabbath vigilance committee, aided by church committees, succeeded in inducing the police to interfere with everybody's business and compel citizens to "conform to their wishes," and Rev. Howard Crosby was "well pleased with the result." To this reverend follower of the meek and lowly Jesus it was pleasant to see the streets clear of the "unsightly apple and peanut stands," and while he stood in the pulpit and lauded the Almighty for his many blessings conferred, including a large salary showered down from heaven upon the said reverend follower, with much holy uprolling of his ecclesiastical eyes he thanked David Dudley Field, God, and the police that the vulgar rabble could not disturb the meditations and prayers of the anointed with the noise and clamor of mere worldly bread-winning. A young Christian indulged in religious ecstacy because the Jew clothing stores, which had been a great source of annoyance to him on his way to church, were closed.

These outrages are properly classified in the code under the heading: "Crimes against religious liberty." The whole code is one colossal crime against Liberty, committed by and for the benefit of members of one of the most dangerous families that ever encumbered this planet.

In the persons of the Field brothers are bodied forth the most flagrant abuses and the most despicable features of our no-system of society. Cyrus W. Field is a typical monopolist and labor-thief. Henry M. Field is a false teacher, spreading, not light, but mental darkness and superstition from the pulpit and the religious press. For the greater profit and glory of these and such as these, David Dudley Field contrives attorneyisms, full of vicious devices and cunning atrocities, in the shape of a penal code and laws compelling conformity to their wishes; and, if any man protests that the paper constitution of the United States is violated by this contrivance, Stephen J. Field sits upon the bench of the supreme court, vested with authority to sustain the code by speciosities and learned unveracities of the law. The whole force and authority of the Church and the State combine to further the schemes of these men and crush out what little of Liberty remains to the people. "The public be damned!" is the keynote of all this miserable business, and, if the people of New York submit to this crowning infamy of American quack government, they will get themselves damned with sufficient speed. There is need for the arrestment of knaves and dastards, — the gods and the Fields, — and the public shall either speedily arrest them or swiftly be damned. These idle have also become disorderly. They should cease disorder, and betake themselves to honest industry, or be abolished. Either that, or Liberty must disappear; destroyed it cannot be, for it is a truth, and only a lie cannot exist forever, be very sure. If the untruths, the penal codes and attorneyisms, be not throttled, they may outlive some generations, however, — a fact which New York may not unprofitably consider.

Constructive Immorality.

The following editorial from "L'Intransigeant," written by Alphonse Humbert *à propos* of the recent arrests of Anarchists and Socialists in France, not only is a keen and powerful argumentative protest against the general theory of constructive crime, but is especially in point here and now, when E. H. Heywood and others are in danger of imprisonment for publicly teaching doctrines which Anthony Comstock and a handful of priests are pleased to consider immoral:

About 1841 or 1842 — I cannot fix the date exactly, but it was in England and at the time of the terrible industrial crisis which followed the introduction of machinery — a Chartist editor expressed the opinion in his journal that the cause of the evil from which the laborers suffered lay in the excessive concentration of population, and, that, in consequence, it was necessary to "burn London." And he urged the workingmen to set about the task at once. He was summoned before a court. The judge discharged him with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Why!" said he, "if it is his opinion!"

Such is the law in countries of liberty. The liberty to think and consequently to speak and write is entire, unlimited, indivisible, and absolute, or it is nothing. An opinion, an idea, though revolting to every conscience and to all common sense, though a hundred times odious and detestable, though destructive of all that men are well-nigh unanimous in respecting, can never constitute an offence. The right to punish begins only with the fact. This is the doctrine — not radical, simply just and human — which M. Victor Cousin, an orthodox, college-bred, and conservative philosopher, formulated in these terms before the court of peers at about the same period, indignant at the scandalous charge of "moral complicity" in the Dupoty case:

Prove to me direct complicity, show me facts establishing actual participation in the crime, and I will be severe. *But I cannot condemn a man for his opinions, however detestable they may be.*

Since that time we have travelled far and done much. We have accomplished three or four revolutions, overturned, repealed, and constructed an enormous number of laws, constitutions, and governments, swept away two monarchies, and we are now in our second republic. It has lasted twelve years. But, in the matter of liberalism, we are still very far behind the English judge and M. Cousin. "Moral complicity," that monstrous legal infamy invented by the doctrinaires of the Restoration and revived, in the face of the indignant outcry of all Europe, by Attorney-General Hébert, — "moral complicity" has remained in our codes. It still sullies them, and is about to be invoked against journalists and orators, as in the days of the state of siege and military tribunals.

Emile Gautier* is prosecuted — I pass in silence the stupid charge of affiliation with the International — for provocation, through the press, to the crimes of pillage, incendiarism, *etc.*, the provocation having been followed by results.

Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue, and Bazin,† our friends of "L'Egalité," are charged with provocation, from the platform, to I know not what other crimes, the provocation, in this instance, not having been followed by results.

In both cases stupidity vies with baseness.

What has Gautier said? They do not even know whether he is the author of the articles complained of. I admit that

* One of the most prominent Anarchists in Paris.

† Three leading French Socialists of the Karl Marx school.

he is. He has said, I admit further, that it is the right of the poor to sweep down upon capital and take by main force tools and workshops and lands and houses and the wealth contained in them, and that, to achieve this legitimate conquest, every weapon is good, — sword and fire and dynamite.

I allow all this to the judges. He has said the whole of it. And I ask the judges with what they are meddling when they intervene. Pure theory, words carried by the wind. The law touches only realities. Where are they?

Elsewhere? At Monteeau-les-Mines? Other men have acted under the influence of these fatal counsels? How do you know? Have you looked into their consciences? You may prove, perhaps, the facts which it pleases you to so readily call crimes, — the judges have not yet passed upon them; but I defy you, whatever happens, whatever proofs you may have in your hands, whatever revelation the trial may bring forth — I defy you to establish that these men would not have acted if Gautier had not written. But that is what you must prove; you have bound yourselves to do so by taking judicial action against the journalist; else words no longer have meaning, every coincidence is transformable into a correlation at the will of a judge, your justice is nothing more than a complex form of absolutism, and your law simply a trap.

It will be answered: We go far in reasoning thus. We go much farther in reasoning otherwise.

I believe, for my part, that, even under the *régime* of universal suffrage, a resort to force remains the highest right of oppressed peoples. I believe it and I say it. At three years from the Sixteenth of May you will not dare, perhaps, to prosecute me.

But who knows? Tomorrow, in six months, in a year, in two years, — for your law has another remarkable side: "provocation," considered as an excuse or mitigating circumstance, cannot be invoked in behalf of the person provoked unless he has acted instantaneously under the immediate influence of the provocation; on the contrary, no lapse of time protects the provoker or relieves him of responsibility, — at any time, then, insurgents may rush into the streets, erect barricades, fight, and be beaten. I shall not know them; perhaps I shall blame their action, and condemn it in my conscience. Moreover, there may be nothing in common between them and me. They may not know of my existence and never have read my writings. They may not know how to read. It matters not. I have provoked. I have a share in the crime and the penalty, — the same share as theirs. And you would condemn me! It is madness; it is baseness. But it is the law.

As for those who participated in the conference at Montluçon, their case is quite different. They have spoken, but no one has acted. Guilty just the same. We have just seen, in the case of Gautier, that one may be an accomplice in an offence or a crime which he has neither known of nor foreseen. M. Devès is preparing to show us, in the cases of Guesde, Lafargue, and Bazin, that one may be responsible for a deed that has not been done, and that there may be complicity where there is neither crime nor offence nor any infraction whatever. Still it is the law.

These pretty things have been in the code since 1819. The Republic has left them there. It seems to me that this would be a good time, in view of this double prosecution, to clean the page stained seven years ago with the blood of Maroteau. A hint to our legislators. A hint to you especially, my dear Maret, who have just taken, regarding the Montceau-les-Mines affair, so useful and honorable an initiative by introducing your bill concerning provisional liberty.

If So, Why?

To the Editor of Liberty:

DEAR SIR, — In the Truth Seeker of November 18, Mr. Bennett, in replying to John S. Cobb, says speaking of the circulation of certain of Walt Whitman's poems, that he does not believe in circulating that which is "indecent and offensive to the usual sense of decency." Deference to the "usual sense of decency" of mankind should have been strong enough to deter Mr. Bennett from circulating "Cupid's Yokes" after his arrest at Watkins; for nothing is more certain than that that pamphlet outrages the "usual sense of decency" of most Christians and of thousands of half-educated Liberals. Mr. Bennett never stops to consult the "usual sense of decency" of Christian people when he is about to throw upon the world a new iconoclastic book, which can have no other effect upon this "usual sense" than to throw it into convulsions of horror and disgust. Mr. Bennett should not forget that this sentiment — the "usual sense of decency" of the human race — is relative, not absolute.

Again: Mr. Bennett imported from England, bound, and circulated a work, "The Elements of Social Science," possessing all the offensive features of "Cupid's Yokes," and others peculiarly its own. In so doing, Mr. Bennett outraged the "usual sense of decency" of every conservative person into whose hands the book fell. But he performed a most meritorious action in introducing this work to American readers, though it would be "indecent, distasteful, or offensive to ninety-nine people in a hundred."

But the "Truth Seeker" editor reveals the cause of his bitter opposition to Walt Whitman's interdicted poems, when he says that sexual matters are "low and indecent." He makes no exceptions in his sweeping denunciation. He does not in the least qualify his scorn of those duties and functions of life which "should be performed in secret." Educated in a theology which holds as inherently vile the body, and especially the sex nature, perhaps it is not a matter of surprise that he has not escaped wholly from its blighting influence. To a man who regards as "low and indecent" the organs and acts necessary to the reproduction of human life it is as useless to talk of the essential purity and cleanliness of Whitman's poems as to "argue with a man who has renounced the use of his reason." Reading Mr. Bennett's diatribe against Whitman and Heywood, it would not be hard to imagine that one was perusing a screed written by some puritan fanatic against the deadly wickedness of "fleshly appetites" and "carnal vanities."

Upon whom has Mr. Heywood "forced" the selections from "Leaves of Grass?" Has not Mr. Bennett "forced" his tracts and leaflets upon people who abhorred their sentiments and held in utter loathing their "bad taste?" Mr. Bennett had a perfect right to select the "obscene" passages from the Bible and print them in a book "for his own use," but he had "no right to make himself offensive by forcing it upon others." This is the gentleman's own logic. According to the moral code he has just formulated he had no more right to publish "The Holy Bible Abridged" than Mr. Heywood had to issue the slips to which he (Bennett) so strenuously objects. His act was just as much in "bad taste" as Mr. Heywood's. If he is sincere in his professions, the next number of the "Truth Seeker" will contain an announcement of the withdrawal from circulation of "The Holy Bible Abridged."

In his reply to Mr. A. H. Wood, Mr. Bennett says: "Mr. Heywood seems to insist on circulating that which to us seems indelicate, improper, and indecent. We are not in favor of circulating such matter, and merely exercise the right to say so." Yet Mr. Bennett claims that certain portions of the Bible are "indelicate, improper, and indecent," and, so claiming and *because* of that asserted fact, he has selected, printed, and published some of these "indecent" passages in book and pamphlet form, and has circulated these books and pamphlets through the mails and otherwise. He says that he is not in favor of circulating "indelicate, improper, and indecent" literature, and yet he takes especial pains to disseminate that which he strenuously insists is the very quintessence of indelicacy and indecency. If Mr. Bennett is opposed on principle to the circulation of such matter, why does he not take out of the market "Holy Bible Abridged" and "Last Letter from Ludlow Street Jail?" And if he does not do so, what are we to infer?

One more quotation from Mr. Bennett: "We cannot think there is any valuable principle involved in such circulation, or that any special good can accrue from it." The same principle is involved that was involved in the circulation of "Cupid's Yokes," for maintaining which Mr. Bennett endured a term of imprisonment in the Albany penitentiary.

The *right of publication* is the question under discussion and the principle involved. Does Mr. Bennett believe that there should be State restriction of this right? If so, why?

Yours for Liberty,

NORWAY, IOWA. E. C. WALKER.

"Max" Looks Into the Poverty Question.

[Boston "Globe."]

"The approach of winter, with its Pandora's box of discomforts and plagues for the poor," quoth Max, "makes itself manifest through the medium of the criminal courts, which are accurate barometers of the lower strata of the social atmosphere. Food, fuel, and clothing begin to swell the expense accounts, and the problem of living assumes a more formidable aspect. Wages do not rise, however, and work is not more easily obtained. The curse of labor — for labor is a curse when by various complicated and cunning contrivances the laborer is compelled to support a horde of useless idlers, and is deprived of his natural right to consume what he produces — weighs heavily upon all who have not learned how to legally rob their fellowmen, and most heavily upon those who are at the bottom of the social structure. It is useless to preach of the dignity of labor and the blessings of destitution to the man or woman whose muscles are tired, and whose gastric juices are instigating a bread riot and fomenting all manner of internal disturbances. There is no dignity in social slavery, no beatitude in an empty stomach, and all the sophistry and cant ever mouthed or written cannot persuade the least ambitious man that it is a privilege to be poor while others roll in plenty. Poverty is not a virtue; neither is it a mere misfortune. Poverty is a crime. It is a violation of the right which the fact of existence confers upon every human being, — the right to gratify all his desires at his own costs which of course includes the right not to be taxed for the gratification of any other person's desires. It is the gross violation and subtle subversion of this right by the contrivances of the iniquitous combination known as civilized society which constitutes the crime of poverty. Poverty is the essence of almost all the crimes known to the law; but, by divers ingenious devices, the punishment or cost of this essential crime is made to fall upon the victim instead of upon those who are justly responsible."

"Your theory may be all right," rejoined the Counsellor, "but what is the use of putting these ideas into the heads of the unthinking classes! It only produces a vague discontent which ignorance may make dangerous. In short, it gives encouragement to the dangerous classes."

"If the monopolist, the exploiter of men, the civilized cannibal can derive any encouragement from the statement of these facts — not theories, mind you — they are welcome to make the most of it. Discontent under oppression is a healthy sign, and ought to be fostered. It does not indicate necessarily a clear understanding of the situation or its cause, but the drift of discontent is always knowledgeward, and with more or less eddying back and forth and catching here and there in dilatory whirlpools it will reach the ultimate fact, the great ocean of truth, wherein all real knowledge must be."

"But what is your application of these facts, as you call them?" interrupted the Counsellor. "I know, of course, that the number of arrests for offences against property is larger than in the warm weather, but what has that to do with labor? It occurs to me that the idle and criminal elements are concentrated in the large cities, being driven in by the inconveniences of winter wanderings through the country, and that the increase of crime is due to the aggression of criminals."

"I grant you that the idlers and the real criminals do flock to the city when the leaves begin to fall," rejoined Max, with a quiet smile. "The watering places usually close up at this time of year, and the beach landlord gazes thoughtfully seaward from his deserted veranda, and abstractedly toys with a lucifer match in his vest pocket. Also the bucolic tramp hies him hitherward, when November winds rustle the hayseed out of his hair and whistle drearily through the crevices of his coat, and institutes a search for shelter and free lunch. But the increase of offenders brought into court is not composed of either class, although the tramp, who is merely a rude imitator of the society idler, does find his way here when the problem of living becomes uncomfortably difficult of solution. It is the accumulation of burdens upon the backs of those who support the whole social system that causes the increase of crime. Poverty becomes more distressful, and, in the effort to avoid some portion of the evil, the rights of property are violated. But whatever may be the radical cause of all this, I intended merely to comment on the phenomena of larceny as observable in this court. You will notice that, when cold weather sets in, overcoats will be in greater demand than straw hats among thieves, which would indicate to some minds that the element of want has a place somewhere in the ethics of larceny. As an apt illustration, take these cases disposed of today: Henry Fullem stole a twenty-two-dollar overcoat, and was given three months in jail. Thomas Hart stole a blanket, and was fined fifteen dollars and costs. Jessie McGregor, being unfortunately fitted out with digestive organs which have not always sufficient employment to keep them from manifesting a spirit of insubordination, stole five pounds of beef, and was ordered by the law to pay a dollar a pound for it and then go without it. Peter Kinsley appropriated a ham, but as he could not show that he had any other excuse than being out of work, and was not hungry enough to eat the ham raw, he was fined three dollars and costs. There is nothing peculiar about any of these cases. They are simply significant to one who takes an interest in the great problem of labor and its reward."

Too Much of a Fool to Do Good.

[Cincinnati "Commercial."]

The eradication of bad is the only principle of good which Mr. Comstock recognizes. He is, consequently, but a poor philanthropist. We have said that his principle is negative in application; he proposes to stamp out vice in order that virtue may prevail, rather than, by some direct means of doing good, to advance the cause of virtue. He will never succeed, for he is too much of a fool, and too shallow in intellect, ever to bestow any benefit on society.

An Error of Omission Rectified.

To the Editor of Liberty:

DEAR SIR, — In your last issue's notice of the case of the United States *vs.* Heywood, you make an omission to which I am sure that your attention has only to be called to ensure its rectification. In designating Mr. Heywood's counsel you leave out the name of Mr. George W. Searle. As an act of justice to that gentleman, who, in connection with this case, is doing valiant and efficient service in the cause of Liberty, I ask you to insert this correction. Faithfully yours,

JOHN STORER COBB.

[Liberty offers sincere apology to Mr. Searle, and is obliged to Mr. Cobb for the correction of its error, which is thus explained. Neither Mr. Cobb nor Mr. Heywood having mentioned any other counsel to us than Messrs. Pickering and Cobb, we were not aware that Mr. Searle had been retained until we entered the court-room on the day of the examination, at which hour Liberty had already gone to press. Perhaps we can best make amends to Mr. Searle, who is not only an earnest radical, but one of the ablest members of the Massachusetts bar, by declaring our wish that Mr. Heywood would make him senior counsel in the case, instead of employing him in a subordinate capacity. — EDITOR LIBERTY.]

THE SONG OF THE "LOWER CLASSES."

We plough and sow, we're so very, very low,
That we delve in the dirty clay
Till we bless the plain with the golden grain
And the vale with the fragrant hay;
Our place we know,—we're so very, very low,—
'Tis down at the landlord's feet;
We're not too low the grain to grow,
But too low the bread to eat.

Down, down we go, we're so very, very low,
To the hell of the deep-sunk mines;
But we gather the proudest gems that glow
When the brow of a despot shines,
And whene'er he looks, upon our backs
Fresh loads he deigns to lay;
We're far too low to vote the tax,
But not too low to pay.

We're low, we're low,—mere rabble, we know,—
But at our plastic power,
The world at the lordlings' feet will glow
Into palace and church and tower;
Then prostrate fall in the rich man's hall,
And cringe at the rich man's door;
We're not too low to build the wall,
But too low to tread the floor.

We're low, we're low, we're very, very low,
Yet from our fingers glide
The silken flow and the robes that glow
Round the limbs of the sons of pride;
And what we get and what we give
We know, and we know our share;
We're not too low the cloth to weave,
But too low the cloth to wear.

We're low, we're low, we're very, very low,
And yet when the trumpets ring,
The thrust of the poor man's arm will go
Through the heart of the proudest king;
We're low, we're low, our place we know,
We're only the rank and file;
We're not too low to kill the foe,
But too low to touch the spoil.

ERNEST JONES.

Good News, If True.

We should like to believe in the advent of such a Democratic party as the following extract from an editorial in the Louisville "Courier-Journal" heralds. But the wish is absurd. The Democratic party, like all political parties, once it obtains power, will be only too ready to centralize it, no matter what Jefferson taught. But, considering principles alone and apart from the instruments of their realization, the "Courier-Journal's" is a true prophecy and as Anarchistic as need be. Liberty asks nothing more than is contained in these brave words:

True Democracy has faith in the people, and it is therefore the inveterate enemy of unnecessary or experimental legislation. Legislation is an evil, and the less of it we have the better. The people are neither infants nor imbeciles; they may safely be allowed to choose good or evil; they do not need to be kept forever in leading strings. The curse of the nation has been over-legislation,—a desire on the part of a few narrow-minded and bigoted men to force the people to live up to their own standard of right and wrong in morals and in commerce. Fortunately we have passed beyond that stage of development when the State tries to force the people to conform to the religious ideas and practices of a peculiar set, or even of the apostles themselves. [Where, and how long since?—EDITOR LIBERTY.] We have abandoned force in religion, but we still cling to it in other matters. We would force men to stop drinking, to buy certain styles of goods, to place their money in certain banks, to abandon certain industries and follow others. We tax them to encourage them; we make them surrender a part of their crops to subsidize others, who else would have to change their occupations or improve their methods. We find men who claim to be intelligent, and especially the friends of the people, insisting on extending the power of government to savings banks, to the telegraph, to railroads, and Henry George demands that the government also "resume" possession of all landed property. These are the dreams and unsubstantial visions of men whose ideas have been warped by the practices of the generation when anti-Democratic practices prevailed in congress. What the people now need is a real Democratic party; a party not afraid of its principles or platforms; a party which realizes that taxation in any form is an evil, and a burden to be so fitted to the shoulders of the people as to bear as lightly as possible on all classes; a party which looks on debt as a curse instead of a blessing, which would not coerce the people even to their own good. This is the new Democracy, and yet it is the Democracy of the fathers of the republic. Noninterference with the habits, practices, ideas, opinions, or prejudices of the people, under the pretence of stimulating trade, protecting labor, building up manufactures, lessening temptation, caring for the savings of the people, or facilitating the interchange of merchandise or intelligence,—these are the principles of this age, the real principles of the Democratic party, and to these the government must return. In "Edwin Drood," Mr. Honeythunder is the professional philanthropist, who would organize societies to bless people who preferred not to be blessed, and all his speeches bore this refrain: "Curse your souls and bodies, come up, and be blessed." The Republican party is a party of Honeythunders: it would bless the people with American iron even at the risk of general bankruptcy; it would force the railroads to use American rails at an additional expense of from five to ten thousand dollars a mile; it would subsidize steamships, cut canals, create savings banks, and at last, in obedience to the demands of the extremists, absorb the lands and the railroads, and use them only for the purpose of blessing a people too weak and stupid to care for itself.

Fortunately, it is understood in all circles that a re-action has come; that the tendency to paternalism and centralization is checked, and that these benevolent projects must be abandoned. The government is to be strictly confined to its legitimate province, and the people are to be left free to pursue, after their own fashion, their desires.

Cost of Executing Freemen's Wills.

The following alarming statistics of election day in New York city, given by Annie Wakeman, a New York correspondent of the Chicago "News," should convince all that the ballot is an expensive master:

There are 683 election polls, to each of which are appointed six polling officers and two policemen, together with four federal officials, making an army of about 5,200 officials, at an expense of about $40,000! There are at least six wooden boxes for bills, banners, and ticket men at each place, making about 4,000 boxes that cost, delivered there, $12,000, and these are manned by about twenty peddlers of tickets and watchers, making another army of 13,000, at a cost of about $50,000. The money expended for printing throughout all the districts on all sides will amount to $50,000. Vote-buying and the like will foot up another $50,000, which will bring the total of the day's election expenses, including rent of polling places, at $60,000, to a round sum of $225,000. The preparations for all this had previously cost at least that sum. "So over $500,000 has been spent in this 'snow-flaking for a freeman's will," I said to myself as I rolled off on my rounds.

Ruskin's "Conservatism."

[London "Truth."]

Some of the disputants who have lately been writing to the papers about "the politics of intellect" have claimed Mr. Ruskin as a Conservative. The following "epitome of opinion," gathered haphazard from "Fors Clavigera," will show that, if Mr. Ruskin is a friend of the Tories, they should devoutly wish to be saved from him. Lord Beaconsfield's policy on the Eastern Question, Mr. Ruskin considered, was "to the everlasting shame of England." Rent is denounced as "the fatallest form of the God-forbidden guilt of usury;" and when asked his opinion about the Irish Land League, he said that its purpose—that Ireland should belong to the people of Ireland—was "ultimately a quite inevitable condition of things;" and that the only principle which could close the agitation was that "each man should possess the ground he could use, and no more."

A Luminous Distinction.

[New York "Graphic."]

The London "Spectator," in commenting upon the late Mr. Darwin's letter, recently published in the "Pall Mall Gazette," in which he says, "I do not believe that any revelation has ever been made," observes, in its usual wrong-headed way, that Mr. Darwin "does deny revelation." So far as the letter spoken of is concerned, Mr. Darwin does not deny revelation. He does not say, "I believe that no revelation was ever made, but "I do not believe that any revelation was ever made." To refuse to assert that a thing is so is by no means the same as to assert that it is not so.

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